

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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Secretary Clinton Says Iranian Aspirations Similar to Those of Egyptians

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the Obama administration's support for the aspirations of the Egyptian people is also true for Iran, and that the protests under way in Iran are "a testament to the courage of the Iranian people." The Iranian government's use of force against demonstrators after repeatedly voicing support for Egyptian aspirations, Clinton said, is "an indictment of the hypocrisy of the Iranian regime."

Clinton spoke to reporters February 14 after meeting with Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives John Boehner.

During Egypt's political unrest, the United States consistently called for nonviolence, supported the universal human rights of the people and "stood for political change that would result in positive outcomes that would give the Egyptian people a better economic and political future," Clinton said.

"We believe the same for Iran," she said. "We wish the opposition and the brave people in the streets across cities in Iran the same opportunity that they saw their Egyptian counterparts seize in the last week."

Urging nonviolence and a respect for the human rights of the Iranian people, Clinton said Iranians "deserve to have the same rights that they saw being played out in Egypt and that are part of their own birthright." The Iranian government should commit itself to opening up their country's political system and "hear the voices of the opposition and civil society," she added.

Clinton noted that during the three weeks of Egyptian unrest, the Iranian regime "constantly hailed what went on," but "now, when given the opportunity to afford their people the same rights as they called for on behalf of the Egyptian people," Iran's leaders "once again illustrate their true nature."

The secretary praised Egypt's military for demonstrating a strong commitment to the Egyptian people by showing "restraint and its support of their right to demonstrate" and said it is now being called on to lead the country through "an orderly, peaceful, meaningful transition to a democratic future."

"This is a very challenging moment for the Egyptian military," she said, and added that so far they have "demonstrated a seriousness of purpose and a

commitment to pursuing the kind of transition that we hope will lead to" free elections and other components of a democratic society.

"We're going to continue working not just with the military, with civil society, with a broad range of representatives from across Egypt's full breadth and depth on the economy, on academia, the professions and every other aspect of their very exciting commitment now to a different future," Clinton said.

One day after welcoming the Egyptian people's peaceful struggle to change their government, President Obama telephoned British Prime Minister David Cameron, King Abdullah of Jordan and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan February 12 to consult on the latest developments and to reaffirm his admiration for the Egyptian people, according to a February 12 White House statement.

The president welcomed the announcement by Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces that it is committed to a democratic civilian transition and its promise to stand by Egypt's international obligations. In his conversations with foreign leaders, Obama "emphasized his conviction that democracy will bring more — not less — stability to the region" and "stressed the U.S. commitment to provide the support that is necessary and requested by the Egyptian people to pursue a credible and orderly transition to democracy, including by working with international partners to provide financial support," the White House said.

The leaders agreed "on the importance of a peaceful transition to a democratic government that is responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people." Obama reaffirmed a strong U.S. commitment to "supporting a more peaceful and prosperous Middle East in close consultation with all our regional partners."

The State Department also said Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs William Burns visited Jordan February 11–12, where he met with King Abdullah, members of the Jordanian government and Jordanian civil society leaders to discuss the developments in Egypt and other issues.

According to a February 12 State Department statement, Burns said the United States has a strong and long-term commitment to Jordan's well-being, and he welcomed King Abdullah's "recent reaffirmation of Jordan's ambitious modernization agenda."

The State Department said that in his meetings, Burns "underscored American support for a sustained, serious and comprehensive program of political and economic reform, which is the key to realizing the enormous

potential of Jordan and Jordanians.”

U.S. to Contribute \$125 Million in Refugee Aid

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States will contribute \$125 million toward the 2011 budget of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), according to the Department of State.

The department announced the contribution in a press release February 11 and said the funding will go toward supporting UNHCR efforts worldwide.

“These efforts include refugee returns to such places as Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo; local integration and resettlement; and protection and life-saving assistance,” the State Department announcement said.

The refugee contributions will be funded through the State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and will support “the provision of water, shelter, food, healthcare and education to refugees, internally displaced persons and persons under UNHCR’s care and protection” in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Colombia, Ecuador, Thailand, Nepal, Pakistan, Sudan, Chad, Kenya and Uganda.

Africa is set to receive more than \$46 million of the total, according to the release. The second-highest sum, more than \$42 million, has been earmarked for countries in the Middle East. More than \$17 million will go to the Asia and Pacific region, roughly \$4 million to Europe and about \$2.5 million to countries in the Western Hemisphere. The UNHCR headquarters and its funds for global operations and emergency response activities are scheduled to receive a total of about \$12 million.

The State Department said December 2010 marked the 60th anniversary of the creation of the UNHCR, an entity mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and solve refugee problems worldwide. According to its website, the UNHCR “strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country.” It added that the agency currently helps more than 34 million people across at least 110 countries.

The United States salutes the “vital and courageous work of the UNHCR, its many [nongovernmental organization] partners and refugee hosting countries in providing protection to vulnerable refugees around the world,” the State Department said.

The State Department’s Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration defines a refugee as “a person who has been forced from his or her home and crossed an international border for safety,” who must have a “well-founded fear of persecution in his or her native country, on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”

The bureau, which aims to provide “aid and sustainable solutions for refugees, victims of conflict and stateless people around the world,” emphasized that the U.S. government provides assistance largely through a multilateral system, partnering with groups such as the UNHCR and others to “maximize impact and minimize duplication” of effort.

Statement on Protests in Algeria

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
February 13, 2011

STATEMENT BY PHILIP J. CROWLEY,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLIC
AFFAIRS

Protests in Algeria

We note the ongoing protests in Algeria, and call for restraint on the part of the security services. In addition, we reaffirm our support for the universal rights of the Algerian people, including assembly and expression. These rights apply on the internet. Moreover, these rights must be respected. We will continue to follow the situation closely in the days ahead.

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